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Pickleball in demand on Cruise ships!

Posted by [Al Hague](#) on 5th April 2018 | 402 views



Dan Fellner, Special for the (Arizona) Republic

SOUTH CHINA SEA — Pickleball, one of the fastest growing sports in America, is starting to make a splash on the high seas.

The sport, hugely popular in active-retirement communities in Arizona and Florida, is now offered on all 14 Holland America ships. And the line's newest ship, Nieuw Statendam, which debuts in December, will feature the game as well.

Other cruise lines, including Princess and Regent Seven Seas, also have added pickleball to some of their ships.

Pickleball is a racket sport that combines elements of tennis, table tennis, and badminton. Paddles are made of wood or composite materials. The ball resembles a wiffleball. The sport can be played with two or four players, although doubles are far more common.

Pickleball was invented in the 1960s in Washington state but only recently has seen a huge growth in popularity. It now routinely attracts more players than tennis in age 55 and older housing developments. The USA Pickleball Association, which is headquartered in Surprise, Ariz., calls it the fastest growing sport in North America.

Erik Elvejord, Holland America's director of public relations, says adding pickleball to the company's ships was a no-brainer "because of many requests we were getting from guests." As an avid pickleball player myself, I was pleasantly surprised to see "meet for a game of pickleball" in the daily program on a recent 14-day Asian cruise on the Holland America Volendam.



I quickly ventured up to the ship's sports deck where Holland America had retrofitted a court that had been used for mini-tennis. The costs for the cruise line were minimal — put some yellow lines on the court, buy paddles and balls, and lower the net a few inches. The courts are surrounded by netting to keep stray balls from landing in the ocean.

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